



CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

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City Manager's Report to City Council Monday, March 8, 2004

Lead Testing in the City's Water System

The City, along with the District and Arlington County, are water partners with the Washington Aqueduct. With the recent concerns about lead contamination in the District and Arlington County's water supply, City staff chose to take a proactive approach. That approach consisted of first collecting water samples from 15 homes for lead testing. These homes are in the same pool of homes that the City has used in the past for its compliance sampling that is performed every three years in June or July. The data from those samples showed that the lead levels were well below the 15 parts per billion levels required by the Environmental Protection Agency's compliance standards.

Although the samples from the first 15 homes resulted in low lead levels, last week City staff conducted additional water sampling from a diverse group of 15 more homes and the Community Center. We are also offering free water sampling kits to any water customer who requests it.

We are happy to report that the results from those 15 additional residential water customers as well as the results from the Community Center also show that their lead levels are well below EPA's compliance standards.

To ensure consistency and confidence in these results, we are still collecting samples from 50 additional residential water customers as well as from the 40 public and private schools in Fairfax County and the City that receive our water. We plan to get those results back by week's end and will announce those results to Council, the public and our regional partners.

Our next steps are to launch an education campaign. We will answer questions about lead, our City's water system, how to determine if you receive water from the City or from the Fairfax County Water Authority, and what are procedures have been when conducting water samples. This information will be posted on the City's website, the Falls Church Community Television station, *The Weekly FOCUS*, through fact sheets that will be sent to parents via the Schools' Friday folders, and through our community organization's newsletters. We are also working closely with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, the Washington Aqueduct, the Fairfax County Health Department and the rest of our regional partners to keep them informed of our efforts and to be kept informed of this issue.

Our public utilities division takes great care in ensuring the safety of the City's water. Twice a month, the City collects water samples from its Chain Bridge pumping station and from the Dalecarlia Reservoir and tests for alkalinity, conductivity, calcium, pH levels, temperature and chlorine levels. Our efforts to test our water for lead are just a precautionary measure to ensure that the recent water concerns affecting our water partners is affecting our water system as well. So far, our results have proven that practice to be beneficial.